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BOROUGH OF SALTASH

Annual Report

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1948

P. J. FOX,
Medical Officer of Health.

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BOROUGH OF SALTASH

Report of the Medical Officer of Health
for the year 1948.

Your Worship, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1948. Judged by vital statistics of Births, Deaths and Infectious Diseases the health of the community, although not markedly below that for England and Wales as a whole, has not been as good as during 1947. The birth rate shows some decrease, the death rate is virtually unchanged, whilst the maternal mortality, infant mortality, and death rate from enteritis and diarrhoea under two years of age are all above the national figure. Infectious disease was more prevalant during 1948, a total of 178 cases having been notified, as against 119 during 1947. The increase was due to greatly increased incidence of whooping cough. Of the more serious diseases, diphtheria and poliomyelitis showed a small increase, scarlet fever and pneumonia a small decrease. There were three deaths from pneumonia and one from influenza. As far as the administrative aspect of Public Health work in the Borough was concerned the year 1948 was marked by two radical changes :—

(1) The National Health Service Act, 1946, came into operation on the Appointed Day, 5th July, 1948. By virtue of this, the St. Barnabas Hospital became a unit of the South West Regional Hospital Board, the duty of providing services under Part III of this Act devolved upon the Cornwall County Council, and all actively practising general medical practitioners and dentists in the Borough came within the scope of Part IV of this Act.

(2) The arrangement whereby the duties of Medical Officer of Health of the Borough were carried out in a part-time capacity by Dr. T. G. Clarke, came to an end, and this appointment was combined with those of five neighbouring County Districts in south-east Cornwall, with the appointment of Assistant County Medical Officer. The duties of the latter appointment relate to the detailed day to day administration of schemes formulated by the County Council under Part III of the National Health Service Act, 1946. Those parts of these schemes which have special reference to the Borough will be dealt with in the body of my report.

I have to acknowledge my thanks to your previous Medical Officer of Health, Dr. T. G. Clarke, to the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. E. N. Smythe, and to those members and Officials of the Borough Council who assisted me in taking over and becoming familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the appointment of Medical Officer of Health.

I have the honour to be,

Your Worship, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

P. J. FOX,
Medical Officer of Health.

Saltash Municipal Borough.

SECTION A.

Area of Borough	6,257 acres.
Registrar-General's Estimate of the 1948 Resident Population	7,410
Number of Inhabited Houses	2,200
Rateable Value of Borough	£51,170
Sum represented by penny rate	£208

VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1948.

Live Births.

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	63	72	135
Illegitimate	3	2	5
	66	74	140

	Saltash M.B.	England and Wales
Birth Rate per 1000 of Population	18.9	17.9

Still Births.

	Male	Female	Total
Legitimate	1	2	3
Illegitimate	—	—	—

	Saltash M.B.	England and Wales
Still birth-rate per 1000 of Population	0.25	0.42

Deaths.

Male	Female	Total
59	42	101

	Saltash M.B.	England and Wales
Death rate per 1000 of Population	13.6	10.8

Deaths attributed to Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Puerperal State.

1 death.

	Saltash M.B.	England and Wales
Maternal Mortality Rate per 1,000 total births	6.9	1.02

Deaths of Infants under One Year of Age.

All causes 7

	Saltash M.B.	England and Wales
Infant Mortality Rate Per 1,000 Live Births	50	34

Deaths from Enteritis and Diarrhoea Under Two Years of Age.

1 death.

	Saltash M.B.	England and Wales
Death rate per 1000 live births.	7.1	3·3

Principal causes of Death at All Ages.

Heart Diseases	35
Cancer (all sites)	19
Intra-Cranial Vascular Lesions (Stroke) ...	12
Respiratory Diseases	11
Digestive Diseases	3
Kidney Diseases	3

SECTION B.

General Provision of Health Services for the Borough.

(a) **Hospital Services.** St. Barnabas Hospital continued to render useful services to the residents of Saltash and the surrounding area, and the medical, surgical, and midwifery facilities provided there have been utilised to their full capacity. From July the hospital passed under the control of the South Devon and East Cornwall Management Committee of the Regional Hospital Board. In addition the large group of Plymouth Hospitals are available for those patients who cannot be dealt with at St. Barnabas Hospital.

(b) **Laboratory Services.** No Public Health Laboratory exists nearer than Exeter. Its functions are carried out by the Pathological Department, Prince of Wales Hospital, Plymouth.

Chemical analyses are carried out for the Borough by the Pathological Department Royal Cornwall Infirmary, Truro, under the direction of Dr. F. D. M. Hocking.

(c) **Services Provided by the Cornwall County Council under Part III of the National Health Service Act, 1946.**

(1) **Care of Mothers and Young Children.** Ante-natal and Post-natal advice for mothers is provided by general medical practitioners and/or district nurse midwives. In those cases where for reasons of obstetric abnormality or unsuitable home conditions arrangements are made for women to be confined in the Alexandra Maternity Home, Devonport, or in the City Hospital, Plymouth, they attend these institutions for ante- and post-natal advice and treatment.

Infant Welfare Clinics have been held every fortnight at the Guildhall. This Clinic, which has been organised and run by a local Voluntary Committee, was taken over by the County Council in July, 1948. It is now run by the Health Visitor, Miss S. L. Luxton, assisted by voluntary helpers, and is attended monthly by Dr. McMillan, Assistant School Medical Officer. The average attendance over the period 5.7.48 — 31.12.48 has been 40 per session, a very good average and one which shows the interest taken by mothers of children below school age in the service. A priority dental service operated by the School Dental Service is available for expectant and nursing mothers and children of pre school age, but during the year 1948 the demand on this part of the service has not been heavy. Proposals are in hand to adapt a building at the Fire Station, for use as a Dental Clinic. When this is established and functioning it is hoped that a much better dental service for these priority patients will be possible.

(2) **Midwifery Service.** During the year three District Nurse-Midwives, Nurse Spreadborough, S.R.N., S.C.M., Nurse West, S.R.N., S.C.M., and Nurse Baker, S.E.A.N., S.C.M., were responsible for providing domiciliary midwifery services in the Borough. During the year they attended 110 confinements and carried out some 2,100 visits in connection with this service.

(3) **Health Visiting Services.** In the Borough, Health Visiting has been carried out by Miss S. L. Luxton, Q.N.S., H.V.

(4) **Home Nursing Service.** In the Borough this work in addition to midwifery has been carried out by Nurses Spreadborough, West and Baker. During 1948 they carried out some 4,200 visits in connection with this service.

(5) **Ambulance Service.** By arrangement with the St. John Abmulance Brigade, the Saltash Division co-operated with the County Council in continuing to run this service after 5th July, 1948. At the end of August, 1948, two members of the Saltash Division, Messrs. Hearl and Parkinson, together with Mr. Rogers of Truro, were appointed as full-time driver-attendants in the Saltash Main Centre of the County Ambulance Service. Voluntary service is still necessary to man the ambulance from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. and from 1 p.m. Saturday to 7 a.m. Monday. For providing this voluntary service, and for co-operating in ensuring the smooth transfer of responsibility for ambulance services to the County Council, the community must be grateful to Superintendent Dwelly, and the members of the Saltash Division, St. John Ambulance Brigade. The following are details of work carried out during 1948 by the Saltash Ambulance car :—

Patients handled.	Miles travelled.
946	9,046.

(6) **Prevention of Illness, Care and After Care Services.** Active preventitive measures in the shape of immunisation against diphtheria, and vaccination against small-pox have been available—the former from the family doctor, and at Infant Welfare Centres, the latter from the family doctor only. The response to vaccination has been very indifferent, and now that this procedure has become completely optional it is likely to deteriorate further. During the year 260 children received primary innoculations against diphtheria, and 20 received reinforcing doses. As far as can at present be estimated some 80% of children below the age of 5 years resident in the Borough have been immunised against diphtheria.

During 1948 it has not been possible to engage in very much health education or propaganda, but as more experience of this type of work is gained, and more especially as better facilities in the shape of permanent health or Welfare Centre premises become available, it should be possible to increase the scope of this work.

As far as care, and after-care of illness were concerned the demand on these services in the Borough has been very small. One case of tuberculosis was in receipt of a grant to enable him to purchase extra rations.

(7) **Home Help Service.** This service was started in Saltash Borough in November, 1948. Its object is the provision of help in carrying out household duties in homes where a genuine need for such help exists, e.g., maternity cases, aged and/or infirm people, and illness. The service is organised by the Women's Voluntary Service with the assistance of the Town Clerk's Office staff. The organiser in Saltash is Mrs. Ward, W.V.S. Because of the short period during which the service has operated in 1948 it is not possible to give reliable figures of the amount of work done, but it can be said that the Home Help Service in Saltash is fulfilling a very useful function.

(d) **Miscellaneous Other Services.**

(i) **Chest Clinics.** Chest Clinics for proven and suspected cases of pulmonary tuberculosis are held twice monthly at Beaumont House, Plymouth.

Orthopaedic, Ear, Nose, and Throat, Ophthalmic, Speech Therapy, and Psychiatric Clinics are held periodically either at regular intervals or as required at the Coronation Welfare Centre, Liskeard. Except for the Psychiatric Clinic the bulk of the patients attending are school children.

Prevalence and Control over Infectious Diseases.

As compared with 1947, when some 119 cases of infectious disease were notified, the notification of 178 cases of infectious disease during the year 1948 represents a moderate increase in incidence. There was a sharp increase in whooping cough from 15 cases in 1947 to 136 cases in 1948. There was a substantial reduction in measles, and a small decrease in pneumonia and scarlet fever. Of the more serious infectious disease 2 cases of diphtheria, and 1 of Poliomyelitis were notified. There were 3 deaths from pneumonia and 1 from influenza. The following are details of infectious disease notified in the Borough during 1948 :—

Disease	Cases notified	Rates per 100 of population Saltash M.B.	England an dWales.
Whooping Cough	136	18.36	3.42
Pneumonia	21	2.84	0.73
Measles	10	1.35	9.34
Scarlet Fever	4	0.54	1.73
Erysipelas	4	0.54	0.21
Diphtheria	2	0.27	0.08
Acute poliomyelitis	1	0.14	0.04

Cases of infectious disease requiring hospital isolation and treatment are admitted to the Swilly Isolation Hospital, Plymouth.

Tuberculosis.

During the year 9 cases of pulmonary and 1 case of non-pulmonary tuberculosis were notified in the Borough. This is on a par with the notifications of this disease in 1947, when the figures were 9 and 2 respectively. There was one death from non-pulmonary tuberculosis during the year. The following table shows details of new cases and mortality from all forms of tuberculosis during 1948.

	New Cases		Deaths	
Age Period	M.	F.	M.	F.
0— 1	—	—	—	—
1— 5	—	—	—	—
5—15	—	—	—	—
15—45	6	3	—	—
45—65	1	—	—	—
65 and upwards	—	—	—	1

At the end of the year there were 48 known cases of tuberculosis resident in the Borough. Of these 42 were pulmonary cases and 6 were non-pulmonary cases.

Suspected and established cases of pulmonary tuberculosis are seen by the Chest Physician, Dr. Cairns, at the Chest Clinic, Beaumont House, Plymouth, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month. Sanatorium accommodation for tuberculosis cases continued to be difficult, and will remain so until building and staffing of additional accommodation can be completed.

National Assistance Act, 1948. Under the provisions of Section 47 of this Act the Borough is required to take action in connection with the securing of care and attention for persons who for various reasons are unable to adequately care for themselves. No action under this section of the act was called for during 1948.

SECTION C.

Water Supply. The Borough is fortunate in being able to obtain an ample supply of pure palatable water from the Plymouth Corporation and the South East Cornwall Water Board. It would, however, appear that the distribution system in the Borough is in need of renovation.

Drainage and Sewerage. The treatment and disposal of sewage is not satisfactory, especially in view of the additional load being placed on the system by new housing construction. It is, however, not possible to comment usefully on this matter until the report from the Consulting Engineers working on this problem is available.

Disposal of Household Refuse. This is collected weekly in the built-up area, and fortnightly in the outlying parts of the Borough. Disposal is by partially controlled tipping on marshy ground. Whilst not wholly satisfactory, this has not given rise to any serious nuisance during the year.

Food Poisoning. No outbreaks were reported during 1948.

Housing. Considerable progress in the erection of new houses and in planning future developments was made during the year. During 1948 the building of houses on the new Warfelton Estate was completed, and the remaining 52 three-bedroomed houses were let to tenants. Further progress was made on the Cowdray Estate.

Factories Act, 1937. The total number of concerns in the Borough—23 in all—coming within the scope of this Act is small, and with the exception of two firms employing close on 100 persons each they are all small installations. No difficulties have arisen under this head during 1948.

Sanitary Inspector's Report. The report by Mr. E. N. Smythe, A.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., Sanitary Inspector, which follows, discusses in greater detail many of the matters touched upon in my report. Members of the Borough Council will be well aware of the multiplicity of tasks and duties which Mr. Smythe has so ably undertaken during the year.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Borough.

REPORT OF THE SANITARY INSPECTOR — E. N. SMYTHE.

SECTION "C"—Water Supply.

Water. Bulk supply of water is taken from Plymouth Corporation via the Royal Albert Bridge, at the rate of approximately 268,000 gallons per day, and also from the South East Cornwall Water Board via Hatt, at the rate of 4,000 to 5,000 gallons per day. The quality is satisfactory but the pressure is only just adequate for present requirements and there is little margin in this respect. The water is of a corrosive nature, and further scraping and the renewal or certain trunk mains is under consideration. In addition the Borough Surveyor has been instructed to prepare a scheme for the extension of the water mains from Hatt to Trematon Castle via Longlands and Trehan, and for the augmenting of the water supply to the Borough as a whole.

Sewage Disposal and Sewerage.

The report from Messrs. Geo. Ivory and Partners, Consulting Civil Engineers, is not yet to hand, and therefore no further action has been taken for the improvement of the drainage system of the town. As a result of increases in the number of houses connected to the main drainage the sewage works are overloaded, and the treatment of the sewage is not all that could be desired.

Refuse Collection.

The collection of household refuse by direct labour using a properly constructed motor refuse vehicle has continued througout the year satisfactorily. Collections are made weekly in the Urban area and fortnightly in the outlying areas. The refuse is tipped at Salt Mill Marsh. Twice weekly collections are made from the Butchers' and Fish Shops during the summer. The purchase of the Refuse Tip by the Council has not been completed, making it impossible to enforce proper controlled tipping, but builders' rubble, which during the year was in plentiful supply, is put to good use by the refuse collectors, who, as far as possible, cover the tipping face with this rubble.. During the year we had considerable trouble from flies on the tip, but this has been overcome by systematic treatment.

Rivers and Streams.

Samples of water taken at intervals from the River Tamar have revealed pollution adjacent to the foreshore. Periodical inspections are made to prevent any pollution, etc., of rivers and streams in the area, and action taken where necessary.

Closet Accommodation.

No conversions from dry conservancy to water carriage system have been made during the year, although some water closets which were flushed by the use of buckets have been provided with automatic flushing cisterns.

Public Cleansing.

Refuse collections have been referred to above. Where cesspools which require cleansing are found, arrangements are made to hire a mechanical cesspool emptier, which is paid for proportionately by the owners concerned.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE AREA.

Cowsheds and Dairies	14
Bakehouses, Shops and Workplaces	83
Infectious Disease, Disinfections	14
Ice Cream Premises	9
W.C's., Drains, Testing, etc.	259
Keeping of Animals	4
Public Houses	10
Disinfestations	30

Defects found and remedied after notice.

Formal Notice	25
Informal Notice	54

Shops. Routine inspections have been made during the year. In addition, regarding Ice Cream Shops, the Council applied to the Ministry of Health to have Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, declared in force in the Borough. All ice cream premises have been registered in accordance therewith. The requirements of the Ice Cream Heat Treatment Regulations, 1947, have cut down the number of ice cream manufacturers in the Borough, and we only have one manufacturer at present.

Smoke Abatement. No nuisance from smoke as this is mainly a residential area with no large industrial concerns which would give rise to industrial smoke nuisance.

Camping Sites. There is one camping site in the Borough for which a licence has been issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Sect. 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936. This site is regularly inspected to prevent any nuisance being caused by the campers or owner of the site. The site is efficiently run and no cause for complaint has arisen.

Sea Water Swimming Bath. The bath still remains closed as a result of pollution by the water of the River Tamar by which the bath is filled. The structure has fallen into disrepair and will probably not be used again as a swimming bath.

Eradication of Bed Bugs. One case was reported during the year which was a moderate infestation. It occurred in one of the Council Houses and the occupants obtained alternative accommodation for 24 hours, during which the house was fumigated and sealed up. There was no recurrence.

Schools. Periodical inspections are made and where necessary reports are made to the County Educational Authorities. In one case individual water closets have been installed to replace trough closets, provision having been made for the infants by the installation of small pedestal water closets. A new canteen has been built at the Council School, North Road, which is very modern in design, and good use of it is made by the children.

Licenced Premises. Inspections were made, and on three premises were found obsolete, defective or insufficient sanitary accommodation. Notification was made to the Breweries concerned, plans submitted, and the work of modernisation carried out.

Rodent Control. During the year the Council availed themselves of the assistance offered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in their circular N.S. 19, Rodent control Scheme. A part-time operator was appointed and the work has been carried out efficiently, the greatest reduction of rodents being on the refuse tip where control had previously been carried out under contract.

SECTION "D"—HOUSING.

The new Warfelton Housing Estate was completed and the houses allocated. The site comprised 111 three bedroom type houses and 12 flats. The layout of the Cowdray Estate was completed and tenders invited for the erection of 24 U.T2 type houses, and two blocks of 4 houses convertible to flats. Another site at Liskeard Road was purchased by the Council for the erection of 16 houses in 1949.

INSPECTION OF HOUSES DURING THE YEAR.

(a)	Total number of houses inspected for housing defects (under the Public Health Act and Housing Acts.)	249
(b)	Number of Inspections made for that purpose	254
(c)	Number included in sub-head (a) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	NIL.
(d)	Number of inspections made for that purpose	NIL.
(e)	Number found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for habitation	2
(f)	Number (exclusive of those referred to in preceding para.) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	3

REMEDY OF DEFECTS DURING YEAR WITHOUT FORMAL NOTICE.

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal notice by Local Authority or their Officers 54

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR.

A. Proceedings under Sections 9, 10, and 16, of Housing Act, 1936.

(1) Number in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied . ... NIL.

(2) Number rendered fit after service of formal notice:—

By Owners ... ... NIL.

By Local Authority in default of owners ... NIL.

B. Proceedings under Public Health Act.

(1) Number in respect of which informal notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 79

(2) Number in which defects were remedied after service of formal notice :—

By Owners 25

By Local Authority in default of owners ... NIL.

C. Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of Housing Act, 1936.

(1) Number in respect of which demolition orders were made ... ... NIL.

(2) Numbers demolished in respect of demolition orders 1

D. Proceedings under Section 12 of Housing Act, 1936.

(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which closing orders were made ... ... NIL

(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which closing orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit ... ... NIL.

HOUSING ACT, 1936—OVERCROWDING.

Two cases of overcrowding were reported during the year, each being relieved by the allocation of a Council house by Plymouth City Council and Saltash respectively.

SECTION "E"—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

A regular check of milk samples taken at Daw's Creameries is undertaken and reports are satisfactory.

There are no slaughter houses in operation in the Borough.

All slaughter of animals is carried out at the Ministry of Food Central Slaughter House at Launceston and routine inspections made of the carcases by inspectors.

Routine inspection of all food preparing and retail food shops is carried out with regard to cleanliness and hygiene.

During the year 277½ lbs. of tinned food and 15½ lbs. veal were condemned and destroyed as unfit for human consumption.

Reference has already been made to ice cream premises.

E. N. SMYTHE,
SANITARY INSPECTOR.